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Isaac, B

**An account of
Samuel Crook**

London

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Sam. Crook
Died 16 Nov
1825
Aged 20
Years

AN ACCOUNT OF
SAMUEL CROOK,
WHO SUFFERED THE AWFUL
Sentence of the Law,
BEFORE THE
DEBTOR'S DOOR NEWGATE,

ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER SIXTEENTH,

1825,

BY THE REV. B. ISAAC,

Minister of Gloucester Chapel, Hackney Fields,

CONTAINING

AN AFFECTING LETTER TO HIS PARENTS.

London :

PUBLISHED BY PALMER, PATERNOSTER ROW;

**SOLD BY READ, BRUNSWICK STREET, HACKNEY ROAD; NEWTON,
MARGARET STREET; AND MAY BE HAD AT THE CHAPEL HOUSE.**

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AN ACCOUNT OF
SAMUEL CROOK,

WHO SUFFERED THE AWFUL
SENTENCE OF THE LAW, BEFORE THE DEBTOR'S DOOR, NEWGATE,
ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER THE SIXTEENTH.

It will be recollected that Edward Mason, William Crook, Samuel Crook, and Anne Gable, were indicted for stealing fourteen pieces of silk, value £150, the property of Messrs. Waterlow and Co., on the 12th of September last.

THE unfortunate Samuel Crook was the apprentice of the prosecutors, who are silk manufacturers, and who slept on the premises. It was proved that on the night of the robbery, he had removed a dog which was generally kept to guard the premises. The next morning, when the robbery was discovered, it was ascertained that the robbers must have received assistance from some person within the house; suspicion fell upon Samuel Crook, and he was taken into custody. From the circumstance of Samuel Crook having been seen on the Friday before, in company with Mason, search was made in the lodgings of the latter, in White's Row, Spitalfields, where the stolen property was found. The female, who it appeared lived with Mason, made her escape from the house, but was soon afterwards apprehended. On a further search, the

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prisoner, William Crook, (brother of Samuel) was found under a bed in Mason's room. A number of facts in addition to, and corroborative of, the above circumstances, were proved by several witnesses. Other persons, servants of the prosecutors, slept on the premises as well as the unfortunate Samuel Crook, who is the subject of this affecting narrative.

I was requested to visit this young man, only twenty years of age, by his afflicted and disconsolate mother about a month since, and three days before he suffered, by himself. They were painful moments; but, I trust, profitable to the soul. He appeared very sorry for the crime he had committed, and I have every reason to believe it was sincere.

On my first visit I held out no hope to him concerning a reprieve in this life. I therefore put some pointed questions to him as to the state of his immortal soul. From the answers he gave me, I was fearful he had not a scriptural view of the plan of salvation. I recommended him to read the Word of Life; he informed me he did from five o'clock in the evening till nearly twelve every night, after he was locked up in his cell; for it was impossible to read it in the day, as there were many persons confined in that place, under sentence of death, who, lamentable to relate, endeavoured to harden each other; and if he attempted to read his bible, they were sure to take it out of his hands. When I heard this, I was very much shocked, and wished those who were not to suffer, were immediately reprieved, as I am afraid, generally, the effect that is so necessary to be conveyed is destroyed. While their lives are in a state of awful uncertainty; conscience, in some, being alarmed, is

attempted to be stifled by others, who more hardened, will go to them and say,—“What! are you sorry for it?” I therefore gave him some advice, and thought I would not repeat my visit until his fate was fixed, as he then most probably would be separated from his companions, and the impression might be of greater importance to his immortal soul!

As I before stated, I was sent for at his own request; the person who came to me, had been his teacher in the Sunday School, at Gloucester Chapel. I was very much pleased at this circumstance, as I should have an opportunity of ascertaining how he had conducted himself. I was perfectly satisfied with the statement he gave me of his conduct and disposition while under his tuition as one of the teachers. “If he was inattentive at any time,” he said, “he had only to call him by his name, and he was still in a moment; his natural disposition was excellent.”

His mother informed me, she never had any trouble with him in her life; his brother had been the occasion of much grief to her; and when she heard of his apprehension, she could not believe it, until she saw him, but said it must be her other son—all this I thought looked well.

I went to the prison, and waited on the Governor, and the Rev. Mr. Cotton, Ordinary, for permission to visit this poor young man; they granted me leave with the greatest courtesy and kindness; for which I returned them my best thanks.

I hastened to the condemned cells, and found the Rev. Mr. Collier, of Hembleton, Rutlandshire, in deep conversation with the poor criminal: he very politely gave way to me, and would have stopped the conversation; but I

requested him to keep on, for he was in good hands: he was at the time I entered, sweetly opening the everlasting covenant of grace, as well as stating in a correct manner, the difference between a natural and an evangelical repentance, and speaking of the completeness and ability of Christ. I took the liberty of putting one of Herbert's Hymns in his hands, which he read, and explained to him the following verses:—

Complete in Christ ! transporting thought !
 A sinner, vile and good for nought,
 Yet sav'd by sov'reign grace ;
 Here angels wonder and adore ;
 Such love was never known before,
 As shines in Jesus' face.

Complete in Christ ! tis heav'ns wonder !
 Poor sinners screen'd from Sinai's thunder,
 And all the craft of hell ;
 This makes redeemed souls rejoice ;
 Christ crucifi'd, becomes their choice :—
 Of this they love to tell.

Complete in Christ ! tis there I'd rest !
 Jehovah is my right'ousness,
 And all I want beside :
 I feel my wretchedness within :
 But Christ my surety had no sin,
 Yet for my sin he died.

This afternoon, his poor distracted mother, brothers, and sisters, took leave of him. It was a final one ! and callous, indeed, must that person have been, who could have beheld such a scene, without the most heart-rending emotions ! Ye tender mothers, picture to yourselves,

the child you gave birth to, about to be torn from you for ever, as it respects this life, and that by a violent and ignominious death!—the subject is too painful to dwell upon.

After his friends had left him, I walked up and down the room for some time, that he might compose himself as much as possible; and about six o'clock that evening I left him, having an engagement elsewhere. On my return to Newgate the following day, there were about six of his family waiting to see him, bathed in tears. I was requested to go into the office, as the Rev. Mr. Cotton wished to speak to me, upon the propriety of so many of his friends being admitted. As he had given him up to me, he said I might act as I thought proper; but he (Mr. Cotton) thought it would be advisable not to admit them. In this I perfectly coincided with the Reverend Gentleman; I therefore stated to his friends the propriety of not disturbing him again; but if *he* wished it they should see him. He said when I parted with him on the preceding day, that he did not wish to see any one again, but his father. I begged of them to consider his feelings under the present circumstances, and not take it unkind of me for thus speaking. I was aware, "that it was easier to give advice than to take it;" but that in his present circumstances, I wished him to be kept as quiet as possible. In my opinion, it is very wrong for relatives deferring their farewell visits to the last day. I am sure they are not aware how much they unsettle the mind of the person they come to take leave of, and how many hours it takes to bring it to the state they found it—even if it was the wish of the poor unfortunate being himself, they ought to be persuaded from it, unless they had something of great moment to communicate: for, my

friends, you must allow, the immortal soul is of the greatest importance ; and that a dying creature should give up every thing to seek an interest in the blood and righteousness of Christ.

When I entered the press-yard, I saw him in earnest conversation with his father, and wondered he parted from him on my entering ; but was informed, that as soon as he saw me, he said, " There is Mr. Isaac, now father, good bye !" So anxious was he to converse on the things of another and a better world, that it afforded me much pleasure. Before his poor father left the place, they embraced each other most affectionately, and said farewell !—he was somewhat composed to see his son so resigned to what would shortly follow ; and the son was borne up with the hope, that although he was parting with an earthly parent, yet he had a heavenly Father in an eternal world. As soon as he was gone out of the press-yard, his father told me that his son wanted to speak to me about a head-stone for his grave ; and likewise begged I would not leave him a moment, but stay with him to the last ; which I willingly consented to. The evening before he suffered, I was obliged to leave him for a short time to preach at Haberdasher's Hall ; after the service I returned to him again, intending to sit up with him the whole night, but was informed, that the rules of the prison did not allow it : the Ordinary thought a few hours rest would be of service to us both, and enable him to bear the approaching event the better. It was my intention then to return home for a few hours ; but the worthy Governor of the prison would not suffer me to do so, but in the most handsome manner offered me accommodation in his house, that I might be at hand to attend the unfortunate youth early in the morning. I

accordingly accepted his proffered kindness, and which I feel greatly indebted to him for on such an occasion.

About ten o'clock I entered the press-room; our conversation consisted on the certainty of the everlasting covenant made between the Triune God of Israel, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I questioned him closely as to his knowledge of these things, and his interest in them. I expounded the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and we afterwards sung two hymns, which were as follows:—

“ When I can read my title clear,
To mansions in the shies,
I bid farewell to ev'ry fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.”

Also —

“ When thou my right'ous Judge shall come,
To fetch thy ransom'd people home !
Shall I among them stand ?
Shall such a worthless worm as I !
Who sometimes am afraid to die !
Be found at thy right hand ?”

The last lines of this verse he sung with the greatest emphasis ! He now expressed a wish to see Mason, the person who tempted him to commit the crime for which he was about to suffer : a letter was sent to the Governor to that effect, and permission granted. At my suggestion he laid down to meditate on the subject we had been talking, as well as to get a few moments rest. He remained composed ; after which, I spoke to him, and he assured me he felt refreshed, having fallen into a sleep. At this moment Mason made his appearance : he

approached the bed on which Crook lay; they took hold of each others' hand, and for some time not a word passed. I thought this a favourable opportunity, and accordingly, endeavoured to impress his mind with the sin he had committed:—pointing to Mason, I said to him, “there lies the victim of your villainy!” I perceived his feelings were moved, and beseeched him most earnestly to consider what he had done; for, in my opinion, he could not be looked on in any other light than the murderer of his friend; and if he did not alter his course of sin, it would bring him to eternal destruction! He made me fair promises to attend to what I said; and may the spirit of God enable him to perform them! Before they parted, Crook wished me to give him his Prayer Book; which I did. They took an affectionate leave of each other, and Mason withdrew.

I requested every person to leave the room, as he intimated a wish to speak to me in private. The subject of his conversation, of which I made memorandums, were as follows:—

“I am innocent of what was charged against me in White's Row, which the young woman swore to. The iron, produced on my trial, I did not see to the best of my knowledge for three weeks or a month: nor did I change my dress, as was stated.”

“I was drawn into it by my brother and Mason, only two days before my apprehension. I wish my late master to be informed I am sorry for what I did; and that which I had committed was done by the persuasion of those who ought to have taught me otherwise. I die in peace with him; and I sincerely hope we shall meet in that place, where sin and sorrow will never more be known!”

“To-morrow week, I wish all that is mortal belonging

to me, to be interred in the burial-ground of Gloucester Chapel, Hackney Fields."

I then recommended him to God in prayer, and left him. After I retired to rest the dreadful machine, on which so many have suffered the awful sentence of the law, was drawn out; this, with the noise of the workmen, in fixing the railing, and the solemn sound of the bell, which announced the hours of the night, together with counting the time the poor young man had to live, quite occupied my thoughts, until the house bell was rung, which summoned me again to the condemned cell, to pay my last visit to poor Crook;—this was about six o'clock. When I entered, I found him in company with Mr. Baker. I asked him how he felt;—he replied, "quite happy;" which I was much pleased to hear. I feared as his approaching dissolution drew near, he would have been shaken. I asked those who sit up with him, the state of his mind; they said it was quite resigned. He requested me to have a head-stone put to his grave, with the first verse of the hymn before alluded to, inscribed upon it, "Complete in Christ," &c.

A few short moments being yet to spare, I again put some questions to him, touching his immortal soul! I entreated him by no means to deceive me in what he felt, for in so doing, he would deceive himself; this was not the time to act the part of a deceiver, as he was on the brink of an eternal world. We can only form our judgment from his words and actions at this trying period!—he seemed perfectly to understand my meaning; and trust, I am not deceived in him. He was one of very few words, and seemed more inclined to be instructed than to dictate, and give his opinion;—he generally sat with his hands clasped in each other, and his eyes fixed on the

ground, with his head continually moving, apparently in deep meditation; and to outward appearance feeling more than he could express:—indeed, when they pinioned his arms, not a muscle appeared to move; and when I took my leave of him it was the same:—all seemed quiet and serene! When he was cut down, I was surprised to see not the least change had taken place!—not even when the artist came to take his likeness for an engraving for this pamphlet, for he made the following remark:—"I have taken portraits of many dead persons, but never saw so mild a countenance—he seems as in a sweet sleep!"

I hope my readers will pardon this digression:—now to my former subject:—

About this time several persons entered; and from the badge of office suspended from the neck of one of them, I recognized in him the person of the Sheriff, coming to demand the body of the prisoner. The Rev. Ordinary now spread upon the table, the emblems of the Saviour's sufferings and death. Previous to the prisoner's receiving the ordinance, he withdrew to a corner of the room: he knelt down, and seemed to agonize with God in prayer—every eye was fixed upon him:—this was, indeed, a solemn moment! I perceived the Sheriff was much affected; and if I mistake not, the tear of pity rolled down his manly cheek! I admired the kind and generous feelings of his soul! The young man having arisen from his devotion, the Lord's supper was administered; this being ended, we removed to the room below, where the arms of the prisoner were pinioned. I said to him, "fear not; these are not like the nails of your dear Saviour which fastened him to the cross!" I forget his reply, being much agitated at the scene. The procession now

moved on. Rev. Mr. Collier, and myself, took our stations at his side, following the officers ; the bell with solemn sound now broke upon our ear—it shook me with horror! I expected it would have agitated the frame of the prisoner ; but, on the contrary (for I had hold of his arm at the time) he turned his head towards me and said,—“ I am going to glory !”—this gave me much pleasure : he repeated the same words to the Rev. Mr. Collier, when he took leave of him at the foot of the platform ; and when he saw the instruments of death, he exclaimed,—“ This is an awful death, but what is this to what my Saviour suffered !”

On my way to the room, where I was invited to breakfast, I had to walk over the graves of Thistlewood and his companions, and could not but contrast the death of the two persons. I was informed by one of the officers of the prison, who locked him up the night before he suffered, that when he was told the Ordinary would see him in the morning, he said, “ he did not want any man to tell him how to die :” and he died without the least contrition for his crime. It brought to my mind that part of the Revelations, chap. xxi. v. 8.—“ But the unbelieving and fearful, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.”

The following gentlemen were present at breakfast :—The Sheriff, the Under-sheriff, city Marshal, the Rev. Mr. Cotton, a gentleman I did not know, and Mr. Baker.

All seemed concerned for the fate of the poor young man, and the painful duty they had to perform. It was the first execution they had been present at, since their appointment to office with the exception of Mr. Baker and

Mr. Cotton. Mr. Sheriff Kelly presented me with a kind present for the parents of the youth.

I now left Newgate, after thanking the officers for their attention, and was the bearer of a letter to the unhappy parents.

I feel it a duty, however, to bear testimony to the cleanliness and order of the prison. I can say from the observations I have made, every thing of that kind is paid the greatest attention to. I could not help remarking, that as soon as the day of execution was fixed, all the other prisoners were removed to another part of the prison, that they might not disturb the devotion of their fellow-prisoner, who was so soon to close his earthly career!

Mason was transported for life, and his brother was acquitted. I have as far as in my power lies, endeavoured to prevail on his father to pardon him, and for this purpose a day was appointed for the meeting; the place was in the room where the body of his brother lay, thinking this affecting scene might have a tendency to impress his mind, and, in due time, to alter his future conduct. Accordingly, we met, and I endeavoured to convince him of the heinousness of his crime: he seemed much affected, and promised an amendment. At this I took the hand of his poor father, who was enveloped in distress, and, placing it in the hand of the son, implored the blessing of God, that, if consistent with his grace, he would enable him to "Flee from that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good."

Agreeable to his wish his body was interred in Gloucester Chapel. He was to have been taken inside the chapel, but the concourse of people that assembled was so great, that we feared some unpleasant consequences

might ensue; we therefore thought it more advisable to take him at once to the destined spot, where he will lay till the morning of the resurrection. I read a part of the 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, and made a few remarks to the surrounding multitude. After this we sang, by the desire of the deceased, that sweet ode of Pope's, "Vital spark of heavenly flame." We then withdrew, lamenting his untimely end!

(A COPY.)

Newgate, Nov. 15th, 1825.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

IN my present unfortunate situation, I feel it my duty to write to you, expressive of my feelings and prospects, as relates to the so nearly approaching change that must take place in regard to another world! and, I think it my happiness as well as my duty, that I have the opportunity thus to console your minds in review of the bereavement you will have experienced before you will receive from me these my dying words.

I cannot but feel, and that in regard of my punishment, that it is severe; but own the sentence just. My mind I can assure you most affectionately, is made up; and I hope to suffer death, and be the inheritor of everlasting life. I find consolation in the cheering thought, that Christ my Saviour also suffered, but that he suffered for the sins of others; but I am consigned to die for my own crime.

I hope and humbly pray, that in a very few hours, I shall exchange a body of sin and world of trials, for a state of happiness, and the embrace of a crucified Saviour; and hope I can apply the following verses to my own experience:—

Christ is my hope, and my salvation too,—
 I now am dying—tis all I have to do ;
 My hope is fix'd, I will not be afraid,—
 A sinner sav'd I am ; my debts are paid.

Farewell, dear friends ! whom I've lov'd so well !
 May you escape the path that leads to hell ;—
 Farewell, vain world ! I've done with all your toys,
 And hope to enter into endless joys !

I leave behind, this poor corrupted clay,
 Entomb'd in earth till the great rising-day ;
 When Christ shall come, this body then will rise,
 And join the bless'd redeem'd above the skies !

Then you who stand around, and see me die,
 No longer mourn for me—no longer sigh ;
 Make him your friend who 's been a friend to me,
 And then you 'r safe to all eternity.

My dear friends, weep not for me, but consider me as gone a little before. It is a mercy I am so situated as to have time to repent, and that I am not cut off without warning. My brother William, I hope, will by my fall take warning, and forsake every wicked way ; and as is said above, "escape the path that leads to hell." He has time given him for repentance ; and I wish, with my dying words, that he will avail himself of the blessing it affords.

Dear sister Betsy, I feel much for her, and hope the Lord will repay her for her kindness to me, and that ere long, she may be the happy subject of Christ's kingdom and glory. My sister Catherine, and my dear sister Mary I also wish the same happiness, as I expect shortly to realize ; my best thanks are due to Mary for her attention to me. My brothers, John, George, and Benjamin, I hope will look back on my misfortunes, and avoid the rock on which I have unhappily fallen. As apprentices, I pray them to be faithful, attentive, and to treat the property of their master's as

indeed sacred, "Touch not, taste not, handle not dishonestly, and let all see that they act as in God's immediate sight, and be sure that sin will find them out." Farewell! may the Lord comfort and support you, as he has done me, and may my brothers, (my dear parents) prove that comfort to you, that is forbidden now to me; but I am going to join those that through much tribulation have entered the kingdom.

My best thanks are due to every person here, for the great kindness they have shewn me on all occasions. Mr. Baker, has been extremely kind, as has the Rev. Mr. Collier; and for Mr. Isaac's goodness in attending to me constantly, and instructing me, I am extremely thankful, and hope the Lord will reward them all in a future state: it is his promise, "that those that water others shall be watered of the Lord."

Mr. Cotton has also been very kind to me; to them, and all the officers of the prison, I feel greatly indebted.

My dear friends, Mr. Isaac will inform you of my dying state, and some temporary wishes as to the interment of my remains. Farewell! dear friends! may the Lord comfort you, and bless you! Your unfortunate, but hope, penitent Son,

SAMUEL CROOK.

Tuesday Night, Nine o' Clock.

April 1896 — o/n